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ABSTRACT

A significant measure of the gradual progress in relating social work education to the racial and ethnic communities in the United States is the development of ethnic content and materials to be incorporated into the curriculum of schools of social work. The process of incorporating ethnic curriculum content generates the process of further development and refinement of ethnic curriculum content. Thus, the development of social work curriculum in relation to social work practice in the barrio should be perceived as a process in which Chicano concerns and aspirations are institutionalized within the schools of social work. Chicano students and faculty and the Chicano community are the major sources for helping to develop such a curriculum. In attempting to show and clarify the opportunities for constructive change which are needed, 3 factors are discussed: (1) the present conditions of Chicano curriculum development, (2) the anticipated directions which future Chicano curriculum development will take, and (3) the methods and processes which are required to facilitate these anticipated directionalities. (NQ)

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AN OCCASIONAL PAPER

OF THE

CONSORTIUM OF TEXAS SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK

# SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION FOR ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED GROUPS IN TEXAS

## *A CHICANO PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT*

by

Rodolfo B. Sanchez

Prepared for presentation at

"The Relevancy of Black and Chicano Content:

Rationale, Rhyme, and Reason" Workshop

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# PREFACE

The lack of representation of minority group members in social work education and the profession has been a salient issue in recent years. In an attempt to deal significantly with this question a meeting was held in December 1968, in Austin, Texas chaired by Dr. Milton Wittman, Chief of the Social Work Training Branch of the National Institute of Mental Health. Sponsored by the School of Social Work at The University of Texas at Austin and the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, this meeting was the primary impetus behind the creation of a Consortium of the Texas schools of social work and the project which they designed, "Social Work Education for Economically Disadvantaged Groups in Texas."

The projects main focus has been the recruitment and retention of economically disadvantaged students, including minority groups; the development of a statewide recruitment structure that will insure the participation of minority group members in social work education beyond the life of the project; and the development of social work curriculum relevant to the minority community and minority group experiences.

In order to achieve the third goal of this project, a series of workshops on "Minority Group Content and the Enrichment of Social Work Curriculum" were held in the four graduate schools of social work in Texas. These workshops highlighted many critical problems and issues involved in infusing ethnic minority content into the curriculum of schools of social work. The articles in this series were presented at the workshops which were held in each consortium school.

Thanks are due to the deans, coordinators, and curriculum committees who assisted in organizing the workshops. Acknowledgement is made to the National Institute of Mental Health whose grant is supporting the Consortium Project. Special appreciation is also expressed to the Advisory Board of the Consortium Project whose suggestion and support helped in the planning and development of the series of workshops.

August 1972

Juan Armendáriz
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# A CHICANO PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

I welcome this opportunity to share with you some of my thoughts on the development of social work curriculum that is related to a Chicano perspective. Although I am concerned today with a discussion of the nature and processes involved in the development of social work curriculum according to a Chicano perspective, I place this discussion within the framework of our ultimate social goal and educational objective, that is, a constructive change in the individual and institutional arrangements between the Chicano community and Anglo-American society, and an improvement in the delivery of social services to the Chicano community.

One significant measure of the gradual progress in relating social work education to the racial and ethnic communities in the United States is evident here, in this workshop, and in its primary focus, the development of ethnic content and materials to be incorporated into the curriculum of schools of social work. Our participation in this workshop forms one part of a broad spectrum of activities, including projects, conferences, institutes, and workshops, that, since 1968, have been concerned with the needs and aspirations of Chicanos and other racial and ethnic communities in the field of social work education. Until recently, these activities have concentrated on identifying issues, formulating recommendations, and initiating experimental pilot projects. At the present time I think that we are entering a different period, one that requires a shift

from the emphasis on pinpointing and discussing issues to a stronger emphasis on initiating, maintaining, and expanding affirmative action programs. More specifically, I think that we should spend less time on identifying and discussing ethnic curriculum content and materials, and more energy on incorporating the ethnic content and materials that we now have into the curriculum of schools of social work. The process of incorporating ethnic curriculum content generates the process of further development and refinement of ethnic curriculum content. For knowledge begins with practice, and theoretical knowledge which is acquired through practice must return to practice.

The major obstacle that we face in the process of incorporating Chicano content into social work curriculum is the limited and hesitant response to change from the schools of social work. At best, their response has been one of partial and tentative co-operation; at worst, it has been defensive resistance or benign neglect. We perceive within the schools of social work an intellectual awareness of ethnicity as a significant behavioral factor and contemporary social phenomenon. But we also perceive a gap between this intellectual awareness and a definite commitment of will and resources to the task of incorporating Chicano content into social work curriculum.

The present period is a time of tension and expectation. There are manifest signs of limited, gradual progress by Chicanos in participating in changes affecting the curriculum in schools of social work. There are countervailing signs of restraint placed on that progress by the lack of affirmative action from most schools of social work in recruiting and retaining Chicano students and faculty

and in incorporating ethnic content into social work curriculum.

My presentation to you today is one attempt to illuminate and clarify the opportunities for constructive change that we face in this period of urgency. Before we can engage in productive co-operation, we must understand clearly the following three factors: (1) the present conditions of Chicano curriculum development; (2) the anticipated directions that future Chicano curriculum development will take; and (3) the methods and processes that are required to facilitate these anticipated directionalities.

## I. THE PRESENT CONDITIONS OF CHICANO CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The most fundamental responsibility of social work practitioners and educators is to determine their educational, training, and practice policies according to actual conditions. According to this principle, an understanding of the present conditions of Chicano curriculum development requires an analysis of two factors: (1) Chicano experience with institutions of social work education and practice, and (2) contemporary Chicano efforts to induce change in social work education and practice.

### 1. Chicano Experience with Institutions of Social Work Education and Practice

Historically, the social work profession has related its clinical perceptions and interventive methods to two major characteristics of social service consumers: Their primary family experience and their relative position in the class structure of society. It is important to recognize that in the total American experience there has always been another vital aspect of social reality (related often to class, but distinguishable from it)---the aspect of ethnicity, of

one's relationship to a unique cultural community distinct from other social aggregates within the wider, surrounding society.

As Ralph Kolodny remarks, "social work thinking for many years has been committed to the notion of cultural pluralism. There are few social workers today who would quarrel with the idea that people of various national backgrounds in this society have a right to differ from one another in their customs and traditions, value orientations and priorities, and in language usage. Yet many have little knowledge of what these differences have meant and continue to mean to clients and group members."[1]

Yet a review of the social work literature, prior to the 1960's, indicates little professional concern with or interest in the significance and impact of ethnic variables on social work practice and education, despite the philosophical adherence of the social work profession to the notion of cultural pluralism.

In fact, of course, ethnic variables have been a dominant and pervasive concern of Anglo-American society throughout its entire social, political, economic, and cultural history. For Chicanos and other racial and ethnic groups the American experience has been characterized by their individual and communal subordination to the institutional arrangements pre-determined and reinforced by Anglo-American society. Cultural pluralism in practice has meant cultural disintegration and assimilation into subordinate roles and functions within Anglo-American society. Ethnicity as a social phenomenon

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1 Ralph L. Kolodny, "Ethnic Cleavages in the United States: An Historical Reminder to Social Workers." Social Work, January, 1969, p. 13ff.

has been tolerated on occasion as quaint and colorful, conjuring up a faint memory of the spurious myth of what it was like in America before we all plunged into the melting pot.

The subordination of ethnic groups and the containment of ethnic conflicts has never been completely successful and permanent in American history, but it has proved to be effective to a remarkable degree. This fact is evidenced by the following quotation, written originally in 1961, but applicable today:

> ". . .With some variations from region to region and from class to class. . .the rank order of various groups is remarkably similar throughout the country and has been substantially the same through decades that have witnessed both rapid changes and earth-shaking events. At the top are white Americans, followed by the British, Canadians, and the various north European groups. Next, in rough order, come the Slavic peoples, south Europeans, and Jews. At the bottom of the ladder are Mexicans, Asians, blacks, American Indians, and Near Eastern groups. . .The groups at the low end of the scale are characterized in terms alien to dominant American values."[2]

The Chicano experience in wider Anglo-American society has been recapitulated in our interaction with the institutions of social work education and practice. From the viewpoint of social work educators and practitioners, their main task was defined as persuading us and other citizens in the society that Chicano culture is basically inauthentic and inappropriate to progress. Our human and social concerns were labeled as "problems" and were said to be caused by subjective and intracultural weaknesses and pathologies.

From a Chicano perspective, the institutions of social work education and practice have long made compromising accommodations

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[2]Muzafer and Carolyn Sherif, "Psychological Harmony and Conflict in Minority Group Ties." American Catholic Sociological Review, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Fall 1961), pp. 213-214.

with the values and priorities of the dominant Anglo-American society. These accomodations have serious and profound consequences for the Chicano community and for the social work profession.

The accommodations made by the schools of social work have been summarized in the Chicano student report on curriculum development and evaluation: "Today schools of social work are constituted and function as institutions historically and culturally conditioned to promote Anglo-American attitudes, values, and behaviors. Their operations remain heavily reliant for financial support on the social, political, and cultural forces that control and manipulate Anglo-American society. As a direct consequence, the social work curriculum is dominated by the Anglo-American perspective on social issues and concerns in policy and practice, reflecting the profile of influence brought to bear by the Anglo-American input constituencies. In addition to the curriculum, the student and faculty populations of the schools of social work reflect the manpower needs and skills of these input constituencies. In turn, student and faculty output relates principally to the articulated needs of these same input constituencies."[3]

Our response to the ethnocentric context and complicities of social work education and practice has developed within the contemporary social phenomenon, El Movimiento de La Raza. El Movimiento de La Raza is an inter-related series of social, economic, political, and psychological developments in the present historical moment of our people and of the total society. It is highlighted by the

[3]Chicano Ad Hoc Committee, Chicanos: A Student Report on Social Work Education. San Diego State College: October 1971, p. 1.

efforts of the Chicano community to participate as subject, author, and actor in those social processes that influence our destiny as a people. From this ferment and resolve for social change there has emerged the concern of the Chicano community to induce change in social work education and practice.

2. Chicano Efforts for Change in Social Work Education

Chicano efforts for change in social work education have originated within the Chicano community itself. These efforts have been stimulated by our desire to improve the quality and distribution of social services to the barrio and to open up the social service delivery systems to increased Chicano input, participation, and leadership. Up to the present time, these efforts have focused on identifying and formulating issues of concern and on initiating experimental educational and training models as alternatives to the traditional mono-cultural training models utilized by schools of social work.

The key issues of concern for change in social work education have been, and remain, the expanded recruitment and retention of Chicano students and faculty, the incorporation of Chicano content into all phases of social work curriculum, and the sustained development of funding resources for these activities.

The Chicano community has utilized support for these efforts for change in these areas of concern from such sources as the Council on Social Work Education and Federal funding institutions, notably the National Institute of Mental Health and the Social and Rehabilitation Service of the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Our work for change has been strengthened by the current trend in Federal funding sources to limit their

support to those programs in social work education that demonstrate clearly that the Chicano community participated in their initiation, planning, and development.

Chicano efforts for change in social work education include a variety of national, regional, and local activities.

First, there are the initial developmental projects, which identify issues, formulate analyses of these issues, and recommend constructive actions. In this category are the San Diego State College Project, administered by the Chicano Ad Hoc Committee, and directed toward a Chicano student perspective on social work education; and the Chicano Faculty Development Project and the Chicano Task Force on Social Work Education, both sponsored by the Council on Social Work Education.

Secondly, there are the combined recruitment/development projects, such as the Texas Consortium, which link the recruitment of Chicano faculty and students to the development of ethnic curriculum content and materials.

Thirdly, there are the Chicano projects which emphasize specialized planning and coordination activities and which assert an advocacy role for the Chicano community with Federal funding sources, social work educational institutions, and social service provider organizations and agencies. Included in this group are the Chicano Projects Council and the Chicano Planning Project.

Fourthly, and finally, there are the Chicano alternative models in educational training. These include: (1) the parallel institutional model developed at the School of Social Work, San Jose State College, San Jose, California; (2) the specialized field training units or centers (such as the East Los Angeles Chicano Mental

Training Center, in conjunction with the University of California at Los Angeles and the University of Southern California; the La Raza Training Unit, San Diego State College School of Social Work, San Diego, California; Centro La Familia, School of Social Work, Fresno State College, Fresno, California; the Latin Teaching/Learning Center, University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration, Chicago, Illinois; and the Centro del Barrio, the Worden School of Social Service, Our Lady of the Lake College, San Antonio, Texas); and (3) the Chicano Training Center, Houston, Texas, which emphasizes the development of substantive modular curriculum for continuing education for different groups within the provider and client communities and within the social work educational institutions.

In summary, the present conditions of Chicano curriculum development have been determined by (1) an analysis of the historical and immediate experience of Chicanos with institutions of social work education and practice, and (2) the emergence of change strategies for both remedial and constructive action. Our efforts to develop Chicano curriculum are intended as an integral part of strategic methods to change the structures and operations of social welfare institutions by transforming the educational process in which social work practitioners are oriented, influenced, and trained in their attitudes, values, and behaviors.

## II. DIRECTIONS FOR CHICANO CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

It should be recognized that, to date, Chicano efforts in the area of ethnic curriculum development have followed the four basic stages outlined by Tyler in the curriculum development model. We are formulating educational objectives, selecting learning experiences in accord with those objectives, organizing these learning

experiences for maximum cumulative effect, and evaluating outcomes in relation to the objectives. These curriculum development activities have led us to an examination of the desired ultimate outcome of the social work educational process, that is, what kind of social work practitioner and community leader do we want? And that examination has prompted us to reassess the nature, form, and process of the training environment in which the social worker is developed.

In short, we perceive that "you cannot put new wine into old wineskins." The nature and functions of Chicano content in the social work curriculum require structural changes in the total system of social work education: in the model of practitioner the school is educating; in the definition of the core curriculum; in the faculty hiring and staffing patterns; in classroom and practicum orientations and techniques; and in the relationship of the schools of social work to the Chicano community. In other words, the schools of social work must learn to become qualified in the process of Chicano curriculum development.

For many years the schools of social work have been operating according to one principle: the ideal social work practitioner should be universalist in scope and generalist in practice methods, that is, he should be able to practice in any community, in any stratum of society. Yet conspicuously absent from the training curriculum for the "ideal social worker" has been a systematic appraisal of ethnic variables in individual and social functioning. Ethnic origins strongly affect the views that persons hold toward themselves and others and influence many of the behavioral choices they make as family members, producers, citizens, clients, and

leaders. Social workers have not been equipped to assess and interpret ethnic variables, and for this deficiency the schools of social work bear major responsibility.

The universalist, generalist modality of social work practice is a Platonic abstraction that bears little relationship to the exigencies of the Chicano experience. For us, the typical social work practitioner has been neither universalist nor generalist. He has been white in skin color and value orientation, and psychoanalytically oriented in method and practice. The hard truth is that he has been perceived as an agent for social control and facilitator for our adjustment to unequal status in this society. He has spoken repeatedly of our gradual absorption into the mosaic of American society and has scrupulously avoided discussing our regional and local imperatives for justice and dignity.

It is by now clear what kind of social worker Chicanos do not want. For the purposes of curriculum development, it is imperative to see that the new role model for social workers that Chicanos envision is more than a negation of the past, but rather a transcendence over the past and a positive response to contemporary conditions.

For us the social worker should be an advocate for justice and a leader for change for the Chicano community. His primary competencies should be in analyzing and utilizing strategies for social change. His basic solidarity should be with the Chicano community, for from that community he receives both his credibility and accountability for practice.

Developing Chicano curriculum with this objective in mind requires structural changes in the nature, form, and process of

social work education. The following examples highlight some of the more significant areas of change.

Changes in the Nature of Social Work Education

The major change in the nature of social work education lies in the dismantling of the ethnocentric philosophy and values of social work curriculum. The world, as seen through northern European eyes and through the American myth from eighth grade civics class, cannot be considered seriously as related to the real world in which we live and practice. For Anglos, the dream, the charade is over; for us, the nightmare is over. Social work curriculum should be related to the diversified needs and priorities of heterogeneous cultural communities.

Changes in the Form of Social Work Education

The fundamental change from ethnocentrism to pluralism requires change in the form of social work education. For us the incorporation of Chicano content into the social work curriculum does not entail the addition of one, two, three classes, or a separate department, or the inclusion of some Chicano materials in some classes. Rather, it entails the re-assessment and realignment of current training models utilized in the curriculum sequences, methods concentrations, and instructional materials.

The majority of the social issues that we confront today do not originate within our cultural context, but rather within our status as an oppressed minority within Anglo-American society. Medical and psychoanalytic models of social work practice, with their emphasis on pathology and social disorganization do not relate to our true existential condition. In its place a more

appropriate training model for social work practice should highlight (1) organizational behavior and its impact on the Chicano community, (2) adjustments in organizational behavior that facilitate Chicano participation in social systems, and (3) methods for relating individual dysfunctioning to its appropriate environmental context.

This new training model for social work practice is designed to equip us with the necessary practice skills for functioning within the barrio and outside, in the barrio's interaction with the dominant Anglo-American society. In the field of social work education these skills relate principally to expertise in planning, administration and community organization and development. In relation to other educational and practice fields, these skills relate, less to psychology and sociology, and more to urban planning, economics, political science, and public administration. As is obvious, these skills cannot be restricted to discrete and autonomous knowledge bases and methods of practice; rather, they are inter- and multi-disciplinary in character.

Changes in the Process of Social Work Education

The changes in the nature and form of social work education require alterations in the process by which social work education is conducted.

If the social worker is intended to relate his rational knowledge and practice skills to contemporary conditions, greater emphasis should be placed on integrating classroom and field learning experiences into a social praxis. The approach used in many schools of social work to treat classroom instruction and

field training as separate entities with occasional linkages is not inherent in the process of learning, but rather in the process by which professional status and hegemony are created and maintained. For the process of learning is essentially dialectic: social work theory is derived from social work experience and is tested and refined by application to the world of practice. Both the classroom experience and the field experience are interrelated components of the learning process, though they may occur in different locations.

I have alluded above to the factor that the social work education process is determined to a significant degree by the professional hierarchy and its ranking system within the schools of social work. Within this professional hierarchical ranking there is often definite demarcation lines between classroom and field faculty, and these demarcation lines indicate degrees of status, influence, and decisionmaking, in the responsibility of developing curriculum sequence, methods, and materials.

The issue of increased recruitment and retention of Chicano students and faculty relates directly to this condition within the schools of social work. Without their input and participation, it is impossible to develop Chicano curriculum content and materials or to incorporate them into the social work curriculum in an effective way.

Currently there are approximately 60 Chicanos teaching in social work education programs throughout the country. At first glance that is some indicator of progress since 1968. But an assessment of their potential contribution to the Chicano curriculum development process must raise further questions about

their substantial numbers and their levels of influence and responsibility. The number of Chicano faculty in schools of social work does not come up to any standard of population parity in relation to the Chicano presence in the population, either nationally or regionally or locally. Further, Chicano faculty are often expected to perform more tasks than other faculty members. They are expected to be recruiters, informational resources, counselors, mediators, field work instructors, supervisors, and developers, and lastly, classroom teachers.

It is significant that Chicano faculty tend to be clustered into two groups: field instructors and assistant professors. To insure Chicano input and participation at all levels of the curriculum development process, they should demonstrate greater upward mobility into positions of tenure and leadership within the schools of social work.

The major obstacles to Chicano faculty advancement are the Anglo professional hegemony and the Anglo system of qualification. The resistance in this area is very substantial and should be explored for its consequences. If social work educational institutions must demonstrate their qualifications to introduce Chicano curriculum content into their training models, they must demonstrate that they possess the faculty competent to handle this task. It is highly questionable today if most Anglo faculties, by themselves, are capable of any systematic appraisal of the Chicano experience in American society. But it is equally clear that there are trained and skilled Chicanos undertaking this task today. The problem is not "finding the qualified Chicano," but making

adjustments for the non-qualified Anglo faculty, whether this entail sensitizing, re-education, or termination of employment. The difficulty that faces Anglo faculty in the schools of social work is this: they cannot avoid the development of Chicano-related social work curriculum nor its consequences--that is, the redistribution of their power and influence and their professional recomposition.

Finally, change in the process of social work education must encompass the contributory roles of Chicano students and the Chicano community.

In regard to the role of Chicano students in Chicano curriculum development, the words of Herbert Aptekar, Dean of the School of Social Work, the University of Hawaii, are especially relevant: ". . .If one recognizes that the essential purpose of the curriculum is to develop a generation of professionals who will have a capacity to contribute to the profession, then one must raise the question where and when do they start contributing?"[4] Only the most dedicated formalist would assert that their contribution begins after the bestowal of the M.S.W. degree. Rather it is in the nature of learning both to receive and to contribute, to participate actively in one's own development.

In regard to the role of the Chicano community in the social work educational process, one thing is clear: the Chicano community cannot be perceived as separate, out there, passive, or

[4]Herbert H. Aptekar, "Constructing and Re-constructing the Curriculum," a paper prepared for presentation at a Southeast Asian Seminar, International Association of Schools of Social Work, Bombay, India, November 1-9, 1971.

acted upon. The social work educational process should be open to community input, participation, contributions, and direction. Only in this way can the social work curriculum be responsive to regional and local imperatives for particular kinds of knowledge and skills. This can be accomplished in part by locating more learning situations in the barrio and by involving community people in classes, seminars, discussions, field placement activities, and research.

I have described some of the major changes in the nature, form, and process of social work education that must occur in the development and incorporation of Chicano content into social work curriculum. In summary, the following remarks are directed toward outlining some general methods and processes by which these changes are to be accomplished.

SUMMARY:

METHODS AND PROCESSES FOR CHANGE

In order to make change efficiently and effectively, it is essential to understand and re-understand the process by which it occurs. According to the Chicano student report on social work curriculum: "The evaluation and development of social work curriculum in relation to social work practice in the barrio should be perceived as a process in which Chicano concerns and aspirations are institutionalized within the schools of social work."[5]

Central to this notion of the process of Chicano curriculum

[5]Chicano Ad Hoc Committee, Chicanos: A Student Report on Social Work Education. San Diego State College: October 1971, p. 2.

development is the principle that appropriate input leads to appropriate outcomes. The major sources of this input are Chicano students and faculty and the Chicano community. Out central participation is essential if social work curriculum is to reflect, articulate, and contribute to the Chicano experience. Our participation will require increased recruitment activities, an adjustment of hiring and staffing patterns and standards, and an allocation of regularly sustained resources for Chicano-oriented research and experimentation.

In this process we seek to instruct the schools of social work in a new and creative role, as institutions co-operating with us in advocating change and in initiating and supporting change. In working toward this co-operation in incorporating Chicano content into social work curriculum, we are mindful of the hard and bitter historical experience of our people with the schools of social work, but we are also eager to make the present time more just and equitable, and we are hopeful for the future, that it will be characterized as a time when "el respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz."

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